

PREMIERE EDITION

# *the Nation*

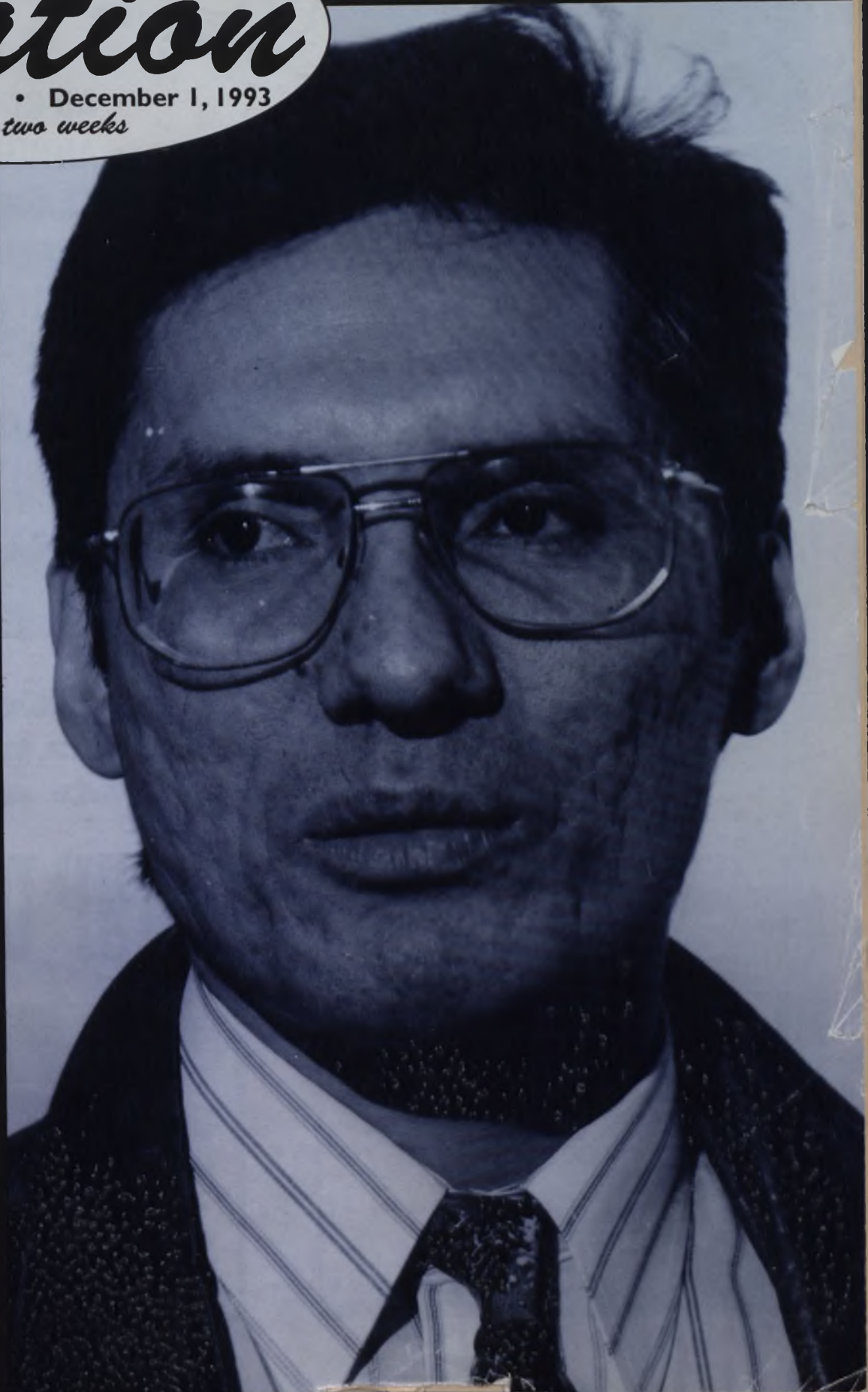
Volume I No. I • December I, 1993  
*every two weeks*

**MATTHEW  
COON-COME  
ON THE STATE OF  
THE NATION**

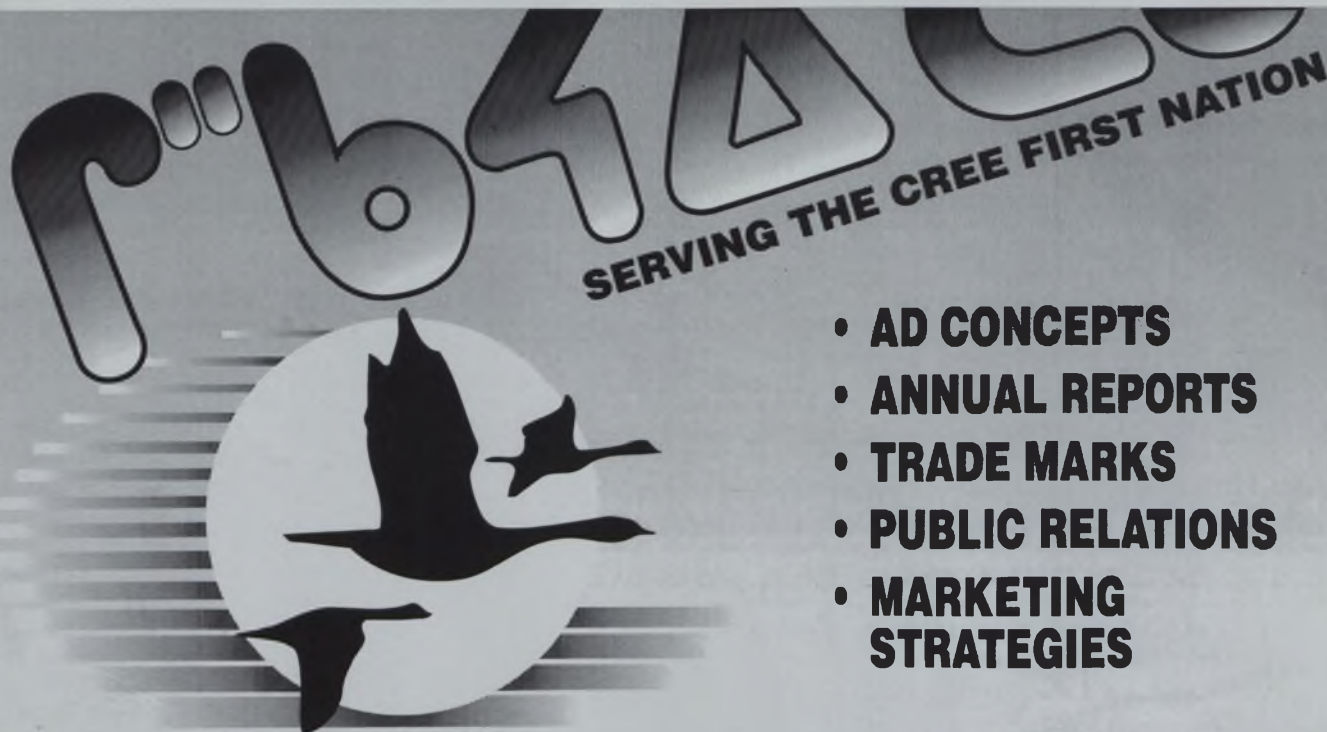
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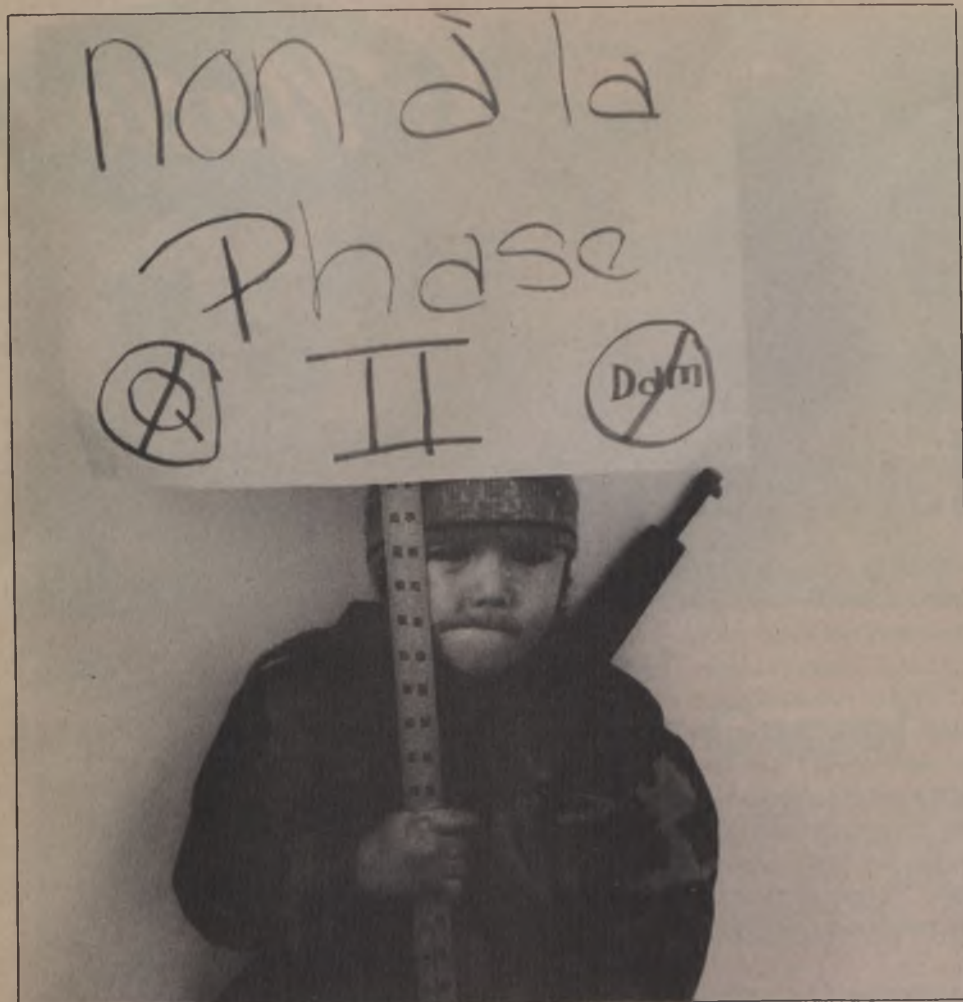


PHOTO: ANTHONY SOUTHAM

## WELCOME TO THE NATION

Wachiyakw missowa aukw mak-o neeshtim badstinmach o missinheegan. *The Nation* eeshinkatau.

Shash wahshkitch kaidaitiman natuaitahkuch dibajimoosinheegan. Eeyakw maiyubeech jahjee chishjibeetaiyaach.

Shash diguin Eeyou eyimoyahbee yabitch inditaitan jahmeyoubeech o missinheegan. Missowa owan eeyau kestchooneeyu jahjee weetik odibajimuin, jah kootshtaiyaach eeyaida missowa owan jahjee bitstinik ooditaitimuin.

Chastait-aguich keebaw aukw maowich neeganch adidiknuich "dibajimuin". K-eyeshit by-kow chi-you mamweedow minshtukch ma-kawch ka bitsee shtimatch eeyim -oy-ahbee ow-a why-ka-bo-tie-yakw ook-shap-jikin

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Mawhich eye-shik-sty-yaach j-eye-skooch-shyt-yatch abit-stin-match o missinheegan.

Nadwhy-dim-match mooku jah-jee weecheeyaatch.

Keya jabit-stinmaku schtit-eye-dimoon-wow.

Nik-wahm-schtook-sheyou-schtaanan bitma aukw itdo jah-meyou-beech, batma j-eye-you-scht-eye-yaatch.

O keeya nik-kootschtan j-eye-shimsinhee-j-eye-yan. Jah-we timoo-yaatch dan-eye-dye-dim-makw.

Chin-skoom-din-an

Missowa  
Ashkw

BY ERNEST WEBB

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DECEMBER 1, 1993





## GOOD NEIGHBOURS

**I**n the United States, the good neighbour policy is alive and well. At least in working-class Worcester, Massachusetts. People had mowed Adele Gaboury's lawn, collected her mail, had her water pipes fixed and generally tried to make life comfortable for this 77 year old lady. Then they discovered that she was only 73. You see she had died of natural causes four years before. One of her brothers confused her with another woman he located in a nursing home. Since Adele and her brother were never close, he assumed that she was still alive and left it at that. One of the good samaritans took a peek into the the house and was concerned about the amount of trash build up on the first floor. He called the police and they discovered her body. Life went on in this city of 160,000 but, as one person told a reporter, "People have their own lives. Neighbours don't want to get involved with neighbors. Neighbourhoods aren't like they were 20 years ago."

Perhaps this story could be seen as a warning. Our communities are growing and the neighbourhoods are changing. Our attitudes towards each other are also in transition. We see it everywhere in our daily lives. I remember a time when no one locked their doors and you could visit anytime. I grew up with stories of sharing the fruits of the land. How a hunter who killed a caribou would go around the village beating a drum to let everyone know and they would come for their share. That at times a young hunter would visit elders with a goose and receive a shotgun shell in return. How many people saved the lives of others. There was no money involved in any of these stories and no personal gain. Once a vital part of community life, they are now becoming a rarity. Today we are more concerned with ourselves and perhaps our extended family. The patterns of violence have become more and more the norm. Stealing from one another, once a terrible, almost unheard of crime, is beginning to be a problem.

I remember a time when everybody knew everyone else's name. Today as our communities grow, this isn't so. But people are concerned about tomorrow and the future. I see and hear that every time I return to Mississauga. When I hear them talk about things they don't like, there is never really any anger in their voices. But rather the tone seems to be of disappointment in not being a Cree action.

"They'll learn, they'll learn..." is often what is said. They don't refer to people when they say this, but seem to be talking to a collective community spirit.

Instinctively, on this level, we know we have much to learn. The changes and impacts on our lives have been phenomenal. I knew a time when there was no road, no electricity or telephone in Mississauga. As a people we are realizing in a very real way that the problems that the southern societies take for granted are just now impacting on us. I feel that this forces us to ask a fundamental question. What are our neighborhoods going to be like in 20 years? This question should be looked at today or will it take us four years to notice our dead?

BY WILL NICHOLLS

the Nation

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## CREE CONSTRUCTION: IS IT WORKING FOR THE CREES?

Cree Construction blames campaigns against more development in the territory for low Cree employment and the company's bottom line in this year's annual CreeCo. report.

"Cree opposition to new projects has had major impacts on Cree jobs and the results of the company," says the report. Grand Chief Matthew Coon-Come responded to the statement by calling it "a gratuitous slap in the face of the Cree people who collectively decided to oppose the Great Whale River and Nottaway-Broadback-Ruperts Projects."

Coon-Come's comments came in a scathing letter sent to the board of directors of CreeCo. (Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Co.), the holding company for Cree Construction Company (Quebec) Ltd. A copy of the letter, dated October 5, was obtained by *The Nation*.

"The economic development of the Crees must be done in a very special way," Coon-Come wrote. He also noted Cree Construction's revenues actually increased by 25 per cent since the previous year, to nearly \$58 million. Coon-Come said that Cree Construction hasn't devoted enough attention to creating jobs for Cree people, improving living standards for Crees or fostering the development of Cree communities.

Jean-Pierre Motard, assistant director-general of

Cree Construction, refused to comment on Coon-Come's letter. He referred questions to Steven Bearskin, the company's president, but Bearskin did not return repeated calls. Motard said Cree Construction employs 300 to 350 full-time workers during the peak season, but wouldn't say how many are Cree.

A list of employees of the company obtained by *The Nation* names 357 workers, most of them employed on a seasonal basis. Of these, 154 are Cree. The list names 28 people working in the company's head office. Only one of them is Cree, Steven Bearskin himself.

The Grand Chief, who sits on the board of CreeCo., also said in his letter that the annual reports should be more straightforward - revealing not only the good news about the company, but the bad news as well. "We all know Cree Construction projects sometimes cause damage to other Cree rights and activities," said Coon-Come. He also questioned whether problems can be resolved "if the annual reports do not make efforts to report on some of the problems as well."

The letter also suggested that Cree Construction's head office should be moved from St-Laurent, a Montreal suburb, to a Cree community.

## PQ BLASTS CREE CONSTRUCTION

The Parti Quebecois is demanding a special audit of a \$73-million contract awarded by Cree Construction to the construction company Beaver Asphalt to build the 116-km Route du Nord connecting Chibougamau to Nemaska. Beaver Asphalt is owned by the family of Tommy D'Errico, former treasurer of the Quebec Liberal Party.

The contract was awarded without the regular tendering process. Cree Construction spokesman Jean-Pierre Motard defended the deal saying Beaver Asphalt got the lucrative contract because the two companies already had a long relationship and "things were going well." Motard also dismissed the PQ's claim that Beaver Asphalt was pocketing \$30 million in profits on the deal. "I don't know where that figure came from," he said. The auditor's office told *The Nation* that a special audit will not be ordered on the deal. PQ MNA Jean Garon, the party's transport critic, said in an interview that more "rigorous controls" are needed when contracts are given out involving public funds.

"It may be part of a larger problem," he said. A second Cree Construction project has also been the subject of controversy. In a November article in *La Presse*, the chief of the Band Council of Ouje-Bougoumou, Abel Bosum, accused Cree Construction of awarding Beaver Asphalt part of a \$12 million contract for projects in his community, again without tender.

Beaver Asphalt spokesman Robert Viau refused to discuss the two contracts. "Forget it, forget it. I don't want to comment on that."

— Alex Roslin

BY ALEX ROSLIN





## Wa'tkwanonwera:ton (Mohawk greetings),

On behalf of the community and the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake, I am pleased to extend our congratulations, as well as best wishes and success on the establishment of The Nation.

Sken:nen (Peace),

Joseph Tokwiwo Norton  
Grand Chief  
Kahnawake



## To The Nation:

It is my sincere pleasure to congratulate the staff and management on the very special occasion of the release of your newspaper's very first edition on December 1, 1993.

I commend The Nation's efforts to preserve and promote Cree culture and the well-being of the Cree nation. I believe that communications is the key to our future. Our languages are a means through which we are able to strengthen our culture and enable us to express to our children who we are and who our ancestors were. The importance of educating and training is critical, if we want our youth to survive and succeed in our competitive global economy. I wish The Nation every success in your efforts to enhance the quality of life by providing the Cree Nation with this exciting and new communications service.

I send my best wishes to all my friends and colleagues in Cree territory.

Ethel Blondin-Andrews, P.C., M.P.  
Secretary of State, Training and Youth  
Member of Parliament for Western Arctic



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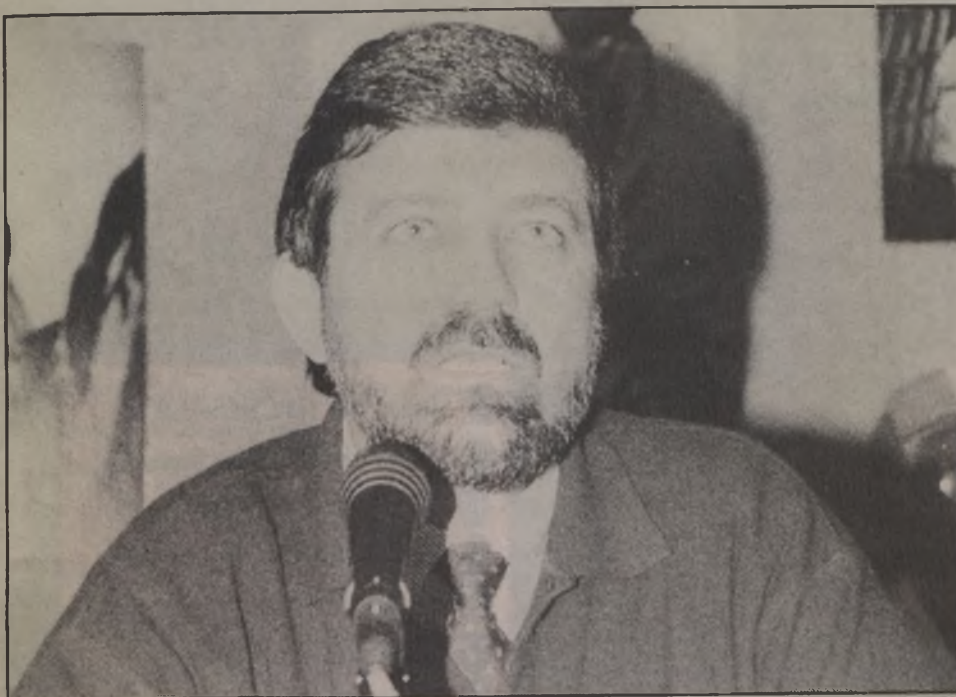
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NEWS



## SIRROS SAYS GREAT WHALE IS ON THE TABLE

He came, he saw, and he left everyone scratching their heads. What was Christos Sirros up to on November 2 when he addressed the Grand Council of the Crees at its Annual General Assembly?

Sirros flew all the way up to Waskaganish to deliver a vague speech filled with nice ideas about cooperation and partnership. A typical sentence went like this: "Both sides have devoted the effort and resources needed to create a climate of trust and to establish a solid basis for dialogue and mutual frankness." But behind the rhetoric were some alarming signals on Great Whale. The Native Affairs Minister hinted that he is gearing up for negotiations on the \$13.3-billion project. That would be news to the Grand Council of the Crees, which has repeatedly voted against entering talks on Great Whale. But Sirros is charging full speed ahead. He expressed satisfaction with prenegotiations recently concluded between Cree negotiator Billy Diamond and Quebec negotiator Yves Fortier, which he said should lead to full-scale

talks on the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. These talks by themselves are good news. The Grand Council has long argued that the Agreement is flawed and needs to be amended. But will Great Whale also be on the table at the talks? Sirros thinks so. "During this round of negotiations, it will, obviously, be necessary to discuss the development of the territory, as the issue is of utmost importance for all of us," he said in his speech. For the Quebec government, the biggest development issue is obviously Great Whale. Sirros didn't actually use the words Great Whale in his speech. But the importance of development kept coming up. Afterwards, we contacted his press attaché, Marie-Josée Gagnon, and asked her what Sirros meant when he spoke of development. "Tourism, fishing, hunting..." she answered. What about Great Whale? "Mr. Sirros didn't exclude anything. On the contrary, he did include it," she said. We asked again, just to be sure: Did Sirros include Great Whale as a development issue? "Right," said Gagnon. "It was mentioned."

BY ALEX ROSLIN

BRIEFS

## NEW CREE RECORD LABEL

A Cree from Wemindji, Gloria Hughboy, has started her own record label called Hughboy Records to record and distribute Cree musical talents. Recording sessions are already booked until the end of March. It shows that Crees are into performing rock, heavy metal, country, gospel and of course fiddle music. A traditional drummer has yet to come forward.

The label's first album will be released in early December in Montreal at a joint launch party with *The Nation*. Entitled, *Best Cree Fiddlers of James Bay*, it will be available internationally this month. Mike McGee, who both produced and engineered the album, says the label's next release will be the sounds of the Northern Eagles, a Cree country rock band. You can contact Hughboy Records or order *Best Cree Fiddlers of James Bay* by phoning 819-978-0380.

For more info on the Hughboy Records/Nation launch party call 514-278-9914.

— by Nation staff

## MOHAWKS TENSE AS QUEBEC CONTEMPLATES RAID

Tensions are flaring in Kahnawake and Kanehsatake as prominent Liberal MNAs and the Parti Quebecois opposition stepped up calls for police raids on the Mohawk communities. Liberal deputies spent a full hour at a meeting on November 10 debating whether the government should order a crackdown on the illegal cigarette trade, which many blamed on the Mohawk communities. Sadly ignored is the 1794 Jay Treaty signed between the United States and Britain, which recognized the right of Mohawks to pass freely across the border without paying taxes. Ottawa and Quebec have refused to honour the treaty despite repeated court challenges and the fact that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



# Merry Christmas

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## BRIEFS

## MOHAWKS TENSE...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

the 1982 Constitutional Accord grants all treaties with First Nations constitutional status. Mohawks are already exempt from most federal and provincial taxes other than border duties.

The outcry is also strange considering that even the RCMP says most of the people involved in the cross-border cigarette trade are white. "Aboriginal people are not the only ones doing it," Cornwall-based RCMP officer Jean Bourassa told *The Nation*. "The majority of arrests are non-native. The vast majority of consumers are non-native. What they are trying to do is label an entire community."

Nonetheless, frequent media reports have portrayed the Mohawk communities as havens for cigarette smuggling, not to mention arms dealing and tax evasion. Kahnawake and Kanehsatake residents briefly went on an emergency footing in mid-November expectation of a police raid, following a statement by Quebec Revenue Minister Raymond Savoie that tougher police measures are needed to put an end to the alleged Mohawk lawlessness. Quebec officials are meeting with officials of the new government in Ottawa to discuss a joint strategy of dealing with the Mohawks.

Meanwhile, RCMP and Sureté du Québec officers continue their practice of stopping cars entering and leaving the Mohawk communities for alleged traffic infractions. In response to the harassment, a human-rights watch at Kahnawake filed 13 complaints with the Quebec police ethics board in spring 1992. But the cases remain unresolved.

— *by Alex Roslin*

## DAVIS INLET INNU REFUSE TO REGISTER

The Innu of Davis Inlet in Labrador have refused to register as Indians under the Indian Act in order to get benefits from federal

programs. They see registration as repugnant.

"The Indian Act is an outdated, colonialist act that treats aboriginal people as children," Innu leader Peter Penashue said in a letter to the Indian Affairs Minister before the federal election. The Innu say they don't want to be dealt with as wards of the state but as a people. Since 1949, Newfoundland and the federal government have shared jurisdiction over the affairs of native people in Labrador.

This, the Innu claim, has led to a situation in which neither level of government fulfill their obligations. The lack of government assistance has resulted in years of community-wide solvent abuse, unemployment and despair.

— *by Nation staff*

## INDIAN AFFAIRS MINISTER A DISAPPOINTMENT

The appointment of a non-aboriginal person, Ron Irwin, as the new Federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development was a "disappointment," Ovide Mercredi, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, said. "The government had an opportunity, a chance to do something different."

Ethel Blondin-Andrews, a long-time Liberal MP and a Dene woman, lobbied for the job but was turned down, newspaper reports said. Chief Mercredi also said he will begin meeting with the new minister to ensure the aboriginal agenda is a top priority for the Liberal government.

— *by Nation staff*



PHOTO: ANTHONY SOUTHAM

## ANTI-GREAT WHALE CAMPAIGN CONTINUES IN EUROPE

The European campaign against the Great Whale project is continuing. Antoni Gutierrez, a Spanish member of the European Parliament, will present a motion opposing the Euro-Quebec Hydro-Hydrogen Project in upcoming weeks.

Set up in collaboration with European companies, the project envisions the sale by Hydro-Quebec of power to Europe for use in buses and cars. The power will be converted from electricity to hydrogen in a Sept-Iles plant for transport across the ocean.

Supporters in Europe say they don't want this fuel at the expense of the Cree. This would reflect a continuation of injustices that Europeans have inflicted on North American First Nations since first contact, they say. The two co-ordinators of the Barcelona Cree Committee, Josep Armengol and Eduard Amoruox, have expressed a firm commitment to fighting the hydrogen project in collaboration with Gutierrez.

Both Josep and Eduard would like to send their greetings to their Cree friends, whom they met in Barcelona last year, and to the rest of the Cree nation.

— *by Clara Valverde*



# THE STATE OF THE NATION

*Grand Chief Matthew Coon-Come took time out of his busy schedule in late November for a wide-ranging two-hour interview with Nation editor William Nicholls about the state of the Cree nation. Coon-Come spoke about his personal motivations for getting involved in politics, about the need for reorganizing Cree economic entities, and laid out his vision for the Grand Council of the Crees.*

BY NATION STAFF

**The Nation:** First, I'd like to congratulate you on your recent re-election. When did you first decide to get into politics?

**Matthew Coon-Come:** When the consultations started on the first phase of the James Bay Agreement, I was a very young man. I was 16 years old. At that time in Mistissini, I was nudged on by friends who heard all the elders and hunters speak. There was no youth representation.

I felt I should get up and say something. I learned a lot just doing that because I spoke about the culture, about our way of life. My grandfather would take me to the shores and force me to sit in the circles of the elders. I heard all the trappers' stories and I could explain it so well I spoke like a trapper. When I got up, I told it from the angle that my father and grandfather would tell it. And I got a standing ovation. I was so proud.

But when I got home, my dad said, "You've learned nothing. You're like the 'White man.' He can explain the culture so well, but he can't hunt. He'd get lost in the bush." I was so mad. I wanted to hit him because I knew he was right. I walked out. Good thing I came to my senses. I said, "You teach me." So he taught me and that was one of the biggest lessons I learned.

When you speak for your people, you'd better know, you'd better practice, you'd better do it.

**Was there anyone at that time who had a big influence on you?**

When I was in residential school, I remember when Martin Luther King spoke in Washington. He spoke with such great vision. I saw him lead the riots and I saw him on TV. I thought to myself, that's nothing new. That's happening to native people. It made me look at where I came from. I said to myself, if he can do it then maybe I can do it. That's where I started.

**Are those reasons still valid for you?**

You're young at the age of 16. When you're a university student, you have different dreams. But I think it's more impractical when you live back home and see the conditions that your people live in. You see other communities and you ask yourself why are our people treated differently? You begin to read the laws of the land and see there is a special law that dictates every move you make, and the minister's somebody in Ottawa making decisions for you. And then you question that. Why is

that?

My belief is that we cannot just stand back and take it. We have to stand up and fight for what we believe in. We will no longer accept the plunder of our lands, the flooding of our lands. To fight this, we have to change the laws and, unfortunately, in order to do it you have to be down south because that's where the decisions are made. The price is heavy to anybody who wants to do that because you're separated from your family. At the same time, you can't exercise something you fought so hard to protect.

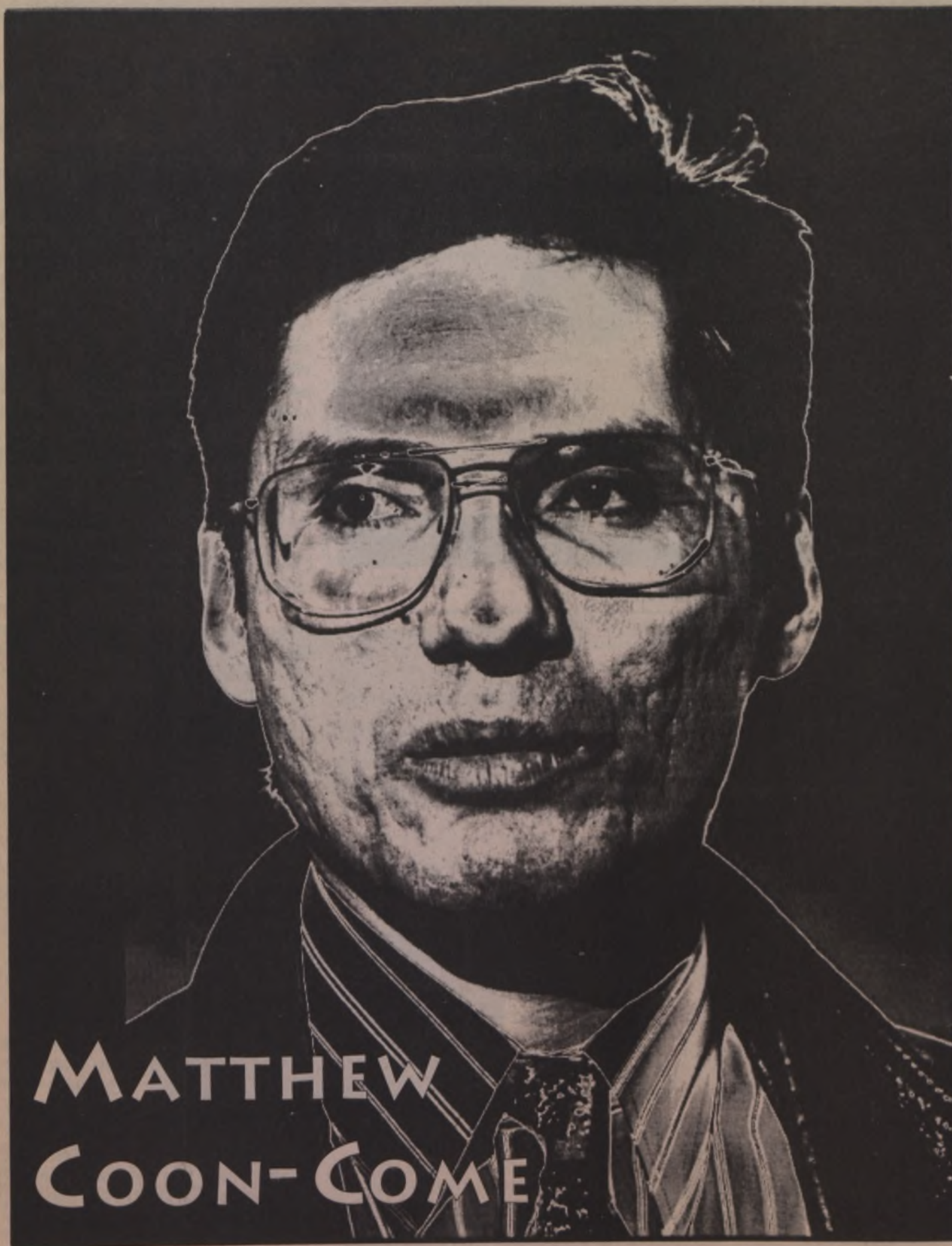
**I was wondering about that. How does your family cope with you being down south a lot.**

I've done this since I was 21 and it doesn't get any easier. It's more difficult. My kids are growing. I have a 16-year-old son. I have a 14-year-old daughter, and a seven-year-old boy, and a six year-old daughter and one that's going to turn three. Five children. It's hard for a mother to try to raise five children alone.

It creates a lot of anxiety, a lot of stress, and a lot of pressure. My teenagers are growing up and they want their dad. No woman should be put in that position. This time around, I'm rearranging my schedule. I think I'm home every weekend now and I'm going to be home every Monday and Tuesday. I told my people,

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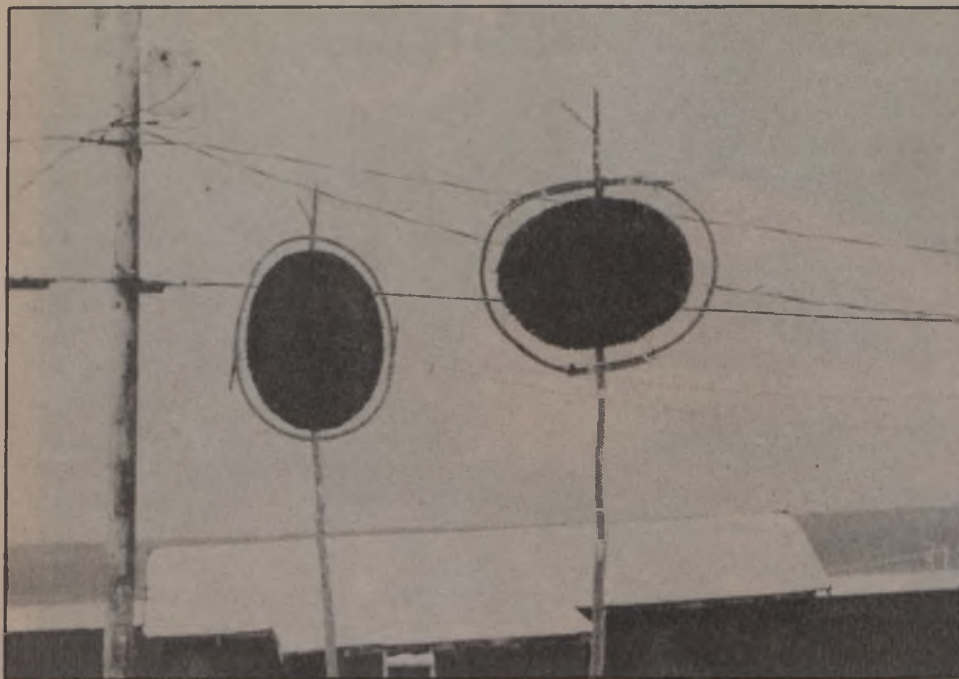


**MATTHEW  
COON-COME**



COVER

# MATTHEW COON-COME...



NATION PHOTO: NEIL DIAMOND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

you want to meet with me, you come and see me. When I'm staying with my family, my family's the priority.

**People said you were exhausted at the end of your last term. If so, why did decide to run again?**

I'm not sure if I was exhausted. It was a rough summer. I lost three people. My nephew lost his son. My wife lost a nephew, a 19-year-old, drowned in an accident. We helped raise that child. And my father's aunt, Julie Coon-Come, passed away. All that happened within three weeks. Every week I was at the graveyard. It had nothing to do with my work.

**One thing about your personal life is that you're Pentecostal. How does religion come into your politics?**

It's not religion. Religion is when you go to church every Sunday, then you do the same things you do on Monday. It's more personal. I believe in the Resurrection. I believe that Christ died and rose again. That he's coming back again. If anyone believes that, whether he's Pentecostal, Baptist or Catholic, I'm in the same group.

I believe I should strive to improve that relationship in the way that I live—sharing, helping, all the values native people have.

If you're a trapper on the land, you know there's a Creator. You're in tune with the land, you're in tune with the animals...

**What have you learned from politics?**

That you've got to fight to get what you want. That you've got to pressure the governments. Embarrass them. Take them to court. Counter their public relations

campaign. You cannot do it sitting behind a desk. You have to be out there, lobbying, motivating people. We're a minority. We're only 12,000 and we cannot do it alone. So you've got to be able to motivate people to take up your cause. Your cause can be their struggle. I think we've succeeded in doing that.

Talk about issues not just in terms of how they affect Crees, but as global issues affecting fundamental human rights. What you do to the landscape is a global issue. How you treat the aboriginal people is a national issue, if not a global issue.

But the strength comes from the people. Because we are still a society that has its own culture. We are still living off the land. That's what makes us unique. It makes us strong. As long as there's a Cree out there on the land, that's what makes us different.

**What are your priorities for this term in office?**

There are several. Back home, you cannot be concerned about the right to self-determination, principles of self-government, debates on the extinguishment clause or policies of the government and the way it treats native people, when you're concerned about a job, how you're going to feed your family, if you've got a roof over your head, and the education of your kids, whether you can go out on the land again because it's going to be flooded.

Those are the preoccupations of the people at the local level. You have to address them. And that work will continue because we have

*As long as there's a Cree out there on the land, that's what makes us different.*

about 250 Indian bureaucrats who are working in the band offices. You have enough people out there who can address these issues, and I'm sure they will. And of course the Grand Council will



COVER

# ...ON THE STATE OF THE NATION

help them in whatever way we can.

But I think the real issue is that so much of our natural resources have been extracted and we're not the beneficiaries of those resources. Outside people come in—forestry companies, mining companies and certainly Hydro-Quebec—and they walk away with our natural resources. We get nothing. We're left with begging and waiting for handouts.

I think the only way to change that is going to a table and sitting down and negotiating. We have fought in courts, we have done a public relations campaign, we pressured the government at the national and international levels. And I think it's almost to the point where we're coming to a meeting of minds. We also have to be concerned about the possible secession of Quebec. That can happen within two or three years and we cannot just wait for secession to happen. We have to be ready before it becomes an international mess.

**Did you discuss these issues at this year's Annual General Assembly?**

I think it's one

of the best general assemblies we ever had. It was different because we are a generation at the portal of history. We've talked about everything under the sun, our way of life, our traditions, our customs. But never once have we made speeches about the future generations, our children, and our children's children.

At this meeting, we looked at the study of policing that we did, health and social services, the increase in suicides. It hurts because you're talking about incest, child molestation, child abuse, violence against women, spouse abuse, sexual abuse. Those are painful issues and you cannot just blame the government, you cannot blame Hydro-Quebec. That's where you get started on the healing process. Our people are hurt. They've

gone through a lot. When you deal with that, it'll make us stronger people. In that sense, I think we've broken the ice. But it's also encouraging to know there are 500 people in post-secondary.

We're now at the crossroads. We have to analyze where we came from and what instruments we used to get where we are. We adopted foreign instruments for the sake of getting funding. We're also reassessing our relationship with Quebec, with Canada and looking at ourselves, trying to develop a vision for the future.

That cannot be done by the Grand Council. It can only be done when we go to the grassroots and do it by community consultation. Get everybody involved and see what type of government we have because we cannot deal with the issues that are before us if we meet once a year in our annual general assembly. It's unrealistic.

It was good when we started. We did not have all these companies before. The only problem we had was the threat of megaprojects. But through the years we've created entities like the Trappers' Association, CreeCo. and all its subsidiaries, the Cree School Board, Cree Health Board. They're all tabling reports and we don't have time to review them and question the way they manage and invest our money. I think it's time to change the way we govern ourselves. We need more of a Cree way, more Cree culture, debates, discussion, consensus.

We actually tried getting hold of one of the annual reports and were told that while the Grand Council was a public entity, Cree Construction was not. Is this the manner in which our entities serve the Crees? We are public companies. That's what we've said all along.

*When the Grand Council makes decisions and those guys go back home, we anticipate that they'll call a band meeting. But often they don't.*

**The Nation was under the assumption that Cree Construction was a Cree company and, as Crees, we can look at its annual reports.**

You see, this is the problem. The problem is that CreeCo. does its reports and tables them at the annual assembly, but they aren't passed around. I guarantee you they'll get stuck in the Chief's office.

Ask your chief for a copy and see if he'll give it to you. It was probably filed somewhere. It's a foreign system and it's a system that we really don't know how to use. You

might find it under "c" for construction. The people who receive the reports are not disseminating them. When the Grand Council makes decisions and those guys go back home, we anticipate that they'll call a band meeting. But often they don't.

If they do, they don't invite us and they take a different position because now their people are questioning things, but they don't have the answers because we are on the front lines and they don't invite us. This system does not work. We table those reports and we expect those people who are supposedly community representatives to take them back to the people.

We have so many companies for only 12,000 Crees. We have different people in Mistissini for Cree Construction. Thomas Coon sits there, but then you have another representative on the Board of Compensation, Buckley Petawabano, and he decides on whether to give money that's made as a request to CreeCo. on behalf of its subsidiary, Cree Construction. That's two different guys. Do they report to their people? I don't know. And then you have the chiefs sitting on the Grand Council/CRA.

Our system is not working the way it should. We've expanded. We've created monsters and we'd better cut some heads off those monsters. If we don't, we're going to run into these type of problems you're talking about.



COVER

# MATTHEW COON-COME...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

## We understand the Great Whale Environmental Review Office may be closed due to lack of revenue or funding.

When we signed the Memorandum of Understanding, we secured some funding, and when we originally submitted a budget, it was way over what we actually got. They didn't give us half what we thought we'd need in order to carry out adequate studies to participate in the making of the guidelines of the environmental review. But we threatened at that time that if they didn't give us the revenue or funding, then we'd have no reason or cause to participate.

It would be meaningless because our people wouldn't be able to properly analyze the report that Hydro-Quebec will submit. But I think we've dealt with that because we pressured the government to contribute financially. They haven't committed funds, but they've appointed their people. But if at any point we don't have the funding, we will pull out. Why participate in a process that's a sham?

## Is there supposed to be a Quebec campaign against the Great Whale project?

When we started the campaign against Great Whale, we did what we could in Quebec. But in the end, we analyzed our position and realized that it's the Americans who are buying the energy. They're the ones who are going to affect our lives. They are the ones who are going to be putting in the dollars that Quebec needs to start. So we decided to go to America. And that hasn't changed because Hydro-Quebec is still out there looking for additional contracts.

So our efforts will still be there, but that is not to say we shouldn't be in Quebec. We have to be in Quebec because we said we wanted a debate. We have set up a mechanism in which we can be involved and will continue to be involved. If you oppose something, you have to come up with alternatives and you have to justify your opposition. So there's a lot of work before us. It's certainly not out of the goodness of Hydro-Quebec's heart or the government of Quebec's heart to say OK to us. We have to use political pressure and our PR campaign.

## Quebec Native Affairs Minister Christos Sirros seems to be under the impression that we're open to negotiations on Great Whale. He's lumped talks on the project in with talks on economic development. Any comment?

Christos Sirros can say whatever he wants. He can try to give the impression that the Crees have mellowed, that the Crees have decided to stop their campaign. Well, he's dead wrong. People are saying, we don't want Great Whale. That'll continue.

But at the same time, Quebec has made promises and not kept them. They've signed an agreement saying that they'd give certain services and programs to Cree people and those have to be addressed.

Not only with Quebec but also with the government of Canada. We have to pursue those if we can get a table. I realize it's difficult. On the one hand, we are pushing them, taking them to court. and they say we are embarrassing them. At the same time, you want to go to the table. At some point in time, there has to be a meeting of minds.

## You've taken the governments to court a lot of times and in fact you are still in court. What court cases are currently active?

The majority of them are filed. We have files at the National Energy Board (NEB)

because Hydro-Quebec through the government of Quebec asked for an increase in their licence to export energy. In essence, they have avoided public hearings and a public debate. I think the NEB acted in bad faith. I think we have a good case on them. We have the EM1 court case. We lost the one in federal court but there's also the provincial case. It's important to find out because of the Great Whale and NBR projects. We have to find out.

We have a court case on Great Whale—the Coon-Come case—in which we will apply for an injunction if they go ahead with Great Whale. We are identifying the unfulfilled obligations of Canada and Quebec in every section of the James Bay Agreement and that in itself is a lot of work. We have a couple of cases that we are not paying for in the U.S. that are being pursued by interest groups questioning the way contracts were done.

## Do you think we will ever allow any more dams on our land through our choice?

Right now, the Crees are saying no. But you can say "no" all you want and the government will still go ahead and do it. That's a possibility. There are some provisions in the Agreement that are not clear. EM1 was not clear. It was part of a plate, part of the technical descriptions.

It was a project that the Crees technically agreed to. Because of the design changes, it required Cree consent. It called for additional negotiations. But our position is that we don't want any more dams.

## Both you and Kenny Blacksmith have come out very sharply in criticism of the economic situation in the communities. Would you care to comment on that?

Knowing that the land is getting smaller and the population is increasing,

*We've created monsters  
and we'd better cut some  
heads off those monsters.*



COVER

# ...ON THE STATE OF THE NATION

the new generation will need education more and will not be able to go out on the land like before. That puts pressure on the communities. You need essential service-oriented projects like gas stations and motels and restaurants and so on.

But you cannot do development if you do not benefit from the natural resources and if you do not have the funding to carry out the feasibility studies. More importantly, you cannot go into things like forestry because those rights have already been given away. The same with mining. You try tourism and the government says that's where we want to put that park or an outfitting camp. Everywhere you go, you run into a wall because the government put into place its own institutions to prevent you from having economic opportunity.

We understood we had a say in the development. We would be partners in the territory. But that is not happening. Other people are benefitting from the extraction of those natural resources. And we are left with those little communities and doing Mickey Mouse projects knowing full well at the end of the day that we are not getting anywhere. We can build the best programs, let's say in forestry, and you invest a lot of money in machinery. But you don't have the wood rights. Somebody else has them.

One of the worst things in the Cree nation is that we have not come together. We compete among ourselves. I think that weakens our economic potential in the territory. We are divided. We spend millions of dollars on those economic development companies and they damn well fall apart because the bands say, "no, we'll do it ourselves." They haven't come to a meeting of minds. We're still at the stage of bickering and backbiting.

*One of the worst things in the Cree nation is that we have not come together. We compete among ourselves.*

**You've been talking to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. In the**

**past these commissions appeared to be government window dressing. What is your opinion of this one?**

When it was first announced at an Assembly of First Nations meeting by the minister, I cited the problems right across Canada for native people. From the low-level flights among the Innu to Clayoquot Sound. These are the problems and you are going to study them for the next three years. I'd hate to see the government wait until the report is finished. By that time, the trees will be cut and the dams will be built. The report will be useless. I still do believe that.

But I also believe the Royal Commission can at least for the record have an opportunity to hear from the people. So that the future generations can see the problems that we've encountered. At some point, you cannot keep fighting and fighting and fighting and opposing and blocking roads. You cannot exist like that. Someday you have to come with solutions and recommendations. I don't think one is a good leader if you just jump up and down, and say we don't agree with this, we don't like you and you can't do that because we say so. You've got to come out with something constructive. We have to give the future generations a solution.

**What did the recent federal election mean for the Crees?**

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister was there during the negotiations in the mid-70's with the Quebec government and signed the White Paper that said Ottawa was assuming a stance of "alert neutrality." I hope that this time it will be better for the Cree nation. I think we're in a strong position because of the possibility of Quebec seceding from Canada.

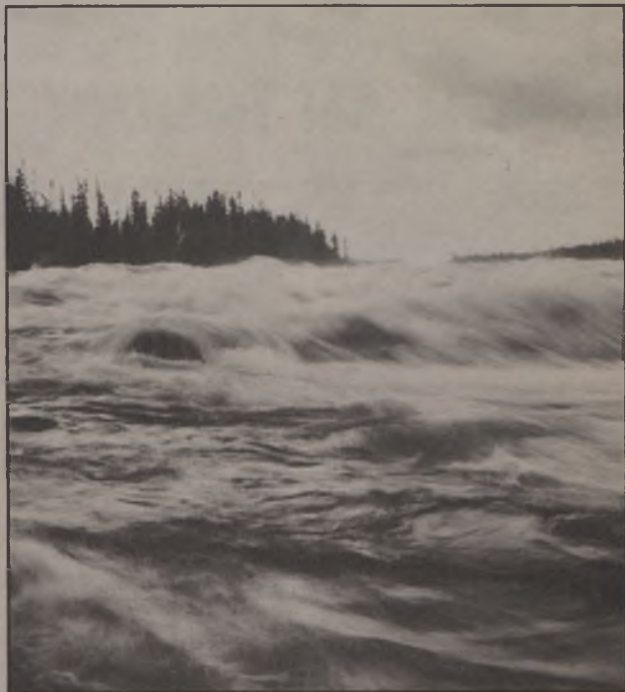
**We all know there are factions within the Grand Council, different viewpoints on what our strategy should be. Could you give us an idea of what they are and how you would resolve the dif-**

**ferences?**

I think it's healthy to have different opinions, to have different approaches. If we all had the same viewpoint, it would be very boring. The government of Quebec has the Liberals and the PQ. The Canadian government has many parties, too. We as leaders face the future so we have to weigh all the pros and all the cons of any decision we make.

**Do you think native leaders across Canada are accountable to the people?**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

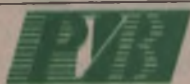




## I AM AN INDIAN

I am the one that respects nature.  
 I am the one that dances with fire.  
 I am the one born of thunder.  
 I am the one that understands living things.  
 I am the one that speaks of pride.  
 I am the one that lives with the land.  
 I am the one of the earth.  
 I am the one that weeps.  
 I am the one that guards my race.  
 I am the one that walks with the Great Spirit.  
 I am the one they call Indian.  
 I am Indian of many nations.

— by Margaret Sam Cromarty



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## THE GIFT

It was sometime in the 1930s and it was winter. A young girl helped her father as he prepared to leave for the trapline. The winter had been unyielding and food in the camp was scarce. The young girl felt despair as she saw the empty packsack. "Papa, what will you eat at mealtime?"

"My daughter, the Great Spirit will look after me." The girl stood watching as he walked away. A younger sister came to stand beside her. She spoke to the young girl with her eyes lingering on her father's distant figure. "I love father so much." "What are you saying?" said the younger girl. "That you love father more than mother?"

"No," replied the older sister, "only that he has no food in his packsack and he believes that the Great Spirit will provide what he needs."

The day passed quickly as the young girls helped their mother with tasks in the camp. The younger children quietly amused themselves in the shelter of the tent. The evening drew nearer with its frosty air and crispy sounds as the young girl anxiously looked towards the trail for her father's approach.

Soon she heard the familiar signs of her father's return. As he snowshoed into sight, the sight of him brought relief into her heart and she ran to meet him. He shook the snow from his snowshoes and stood them upright against the tent. She followed him into the shelter. He began the process of removing his packsack setting it on the ground and his outer clothing which he hung on a nail to dry. He rubbed his hands together stretching towards the heat of the small square camp stove.

The wet curls on his head glistened in the candlelight. He wiped the wetness from his moustache with the back of his hand. He reached for the tin cup of hot tea that his daughter held towards him.

As he settled himself and his cup on the soft pine needles he reached into his pocket for his pipe. The young girl watched and waited for him to settle in. Finally he spoke.

"My daughter, after I had scouted and checked half of my empty snares this morning I stopped near a shelter of trees. I gathered some partially dried wood and started a fire. I filled a tea kettle with melted snow and hung it on a branch to boil. As I waited for the water to boil I heard a sound in the trees near me and looking up I focussed on a Wiskeyack sitting on a branch.

"My only weapons were the sticks I had laid beside to feed the fire. My hand curled around a firm and good sized stick. I carefully rose from my knees and struck the Wiskeyjack. After I had cleaned it I roasted it over the open fire. When I had eaten half of the Wiskeyjack I was very full."

The father reached for his packsack, undid the ties, opened the flap and reaching in brought out a small carefully wrapped package. "Remember, my daughter, this morning I told you the Great Spirit would look after me. I have brought you back the other half of the Wiskeyjack."

*Written by Dorothy Macleod-Nicholls,  
 as told to her by her mother. The young girl was  
 Mary-Ann Matoush-Macleod, the younger sister  
 Maggie Wapachee and the father William Matoush.*



## CULTURE



## CHILDREN IN THE SNOW

The Story teller  
choose his words carefully  
of sorrow and horror

These were the children  
Small children  
One was maybe six and the other ten  
They lived with their parents

The mother and father  
drank to have a good time  
They did not care if there was food  
or heat in the house

The parents all they thought  
was themselves  
The children wanted love and care  
But ended up being lonely and hurt

One day the parents  
went on a drunken binge  
As always they left the little ones alone

The sweet children  
were left alone again  
the uncaring parents  
swept away by their own wants

The children hungry and cold  
Hurting, hid in a small room

The little one  
her little face scared  
Told the older one  
I am hungry

The ten year old  
held the little one to her breast  
The child whispered  
run into the kitchen get bread for me

The ten year old blamed herself  
being afraid  
I'll get you milk and bread  
even if they catch and beat me

She went bravely  
toward the angry voices  
to get food  
a threat drove her back

The ten year old  
cried with joy  
Let's go to grandmas house  
She is waiting for us

Wrapping the little one  
in a blanket  
They crept out of the window  
Into the cold November night

In the winds of winter  
Stood grandma's house  
The children felt warm  
Touched by happiness

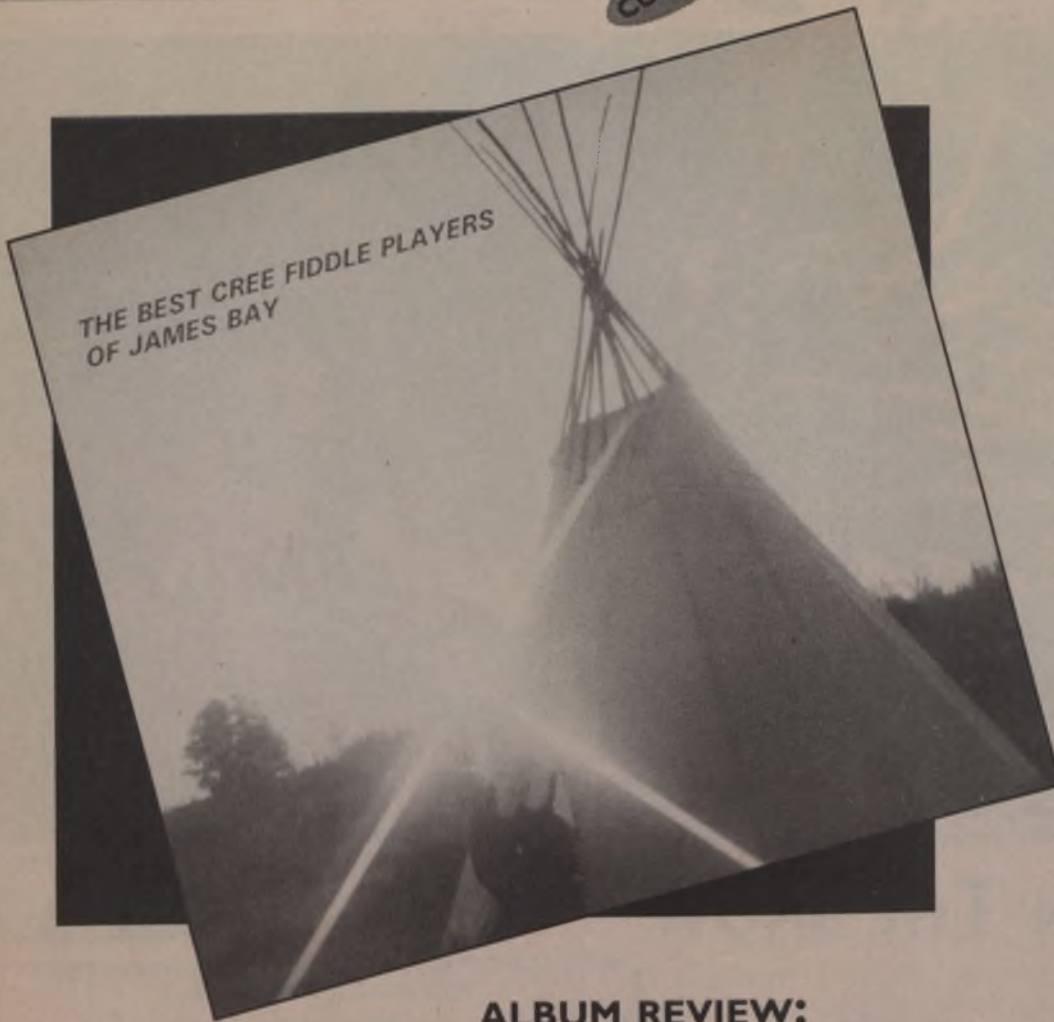
But there was only emptiness  
Grandma's house was locked  
The soft holy snowflakes  
Gathered and melted with their tears

The older one  
Took the little child  
By the hand  
Then carried her sister home

Next morning the children  
Were found  
In each other's arms  
Gently pearl white snowflakes  
Cover them in death

— by Margaret Sam Cromarty





## ALBUM REVIEW:

## THE BEST CREE FIDDLE PLAYERS OF JAMES BAY

Sometimes in my youth I used to hear what could only be described as an ungodly screeching and wailing as someone practiced on the fiddle. These people would gradually get better and better, and start to play at dances, feasts and weddings. They would play for hours on end entertaining an entire community.

The community hall would actually rock on its foundations to the square dancing that accompanied many a reel. The children laughed and tried to imitate their elders as they danced. My favourite was always the kerchief dance because even the shyest person got a chance to dance without being embarrassed. Well, not that embarrassed, though my face was occasionally various shades of red that I could always blame on the breathlessness that accompanied a really long number. All these memories came rushing back in an overwhelming flood when I popped this CD in and pressed play. Any advocate of fiddling music or anyone who has a few special memories they'd like to feel once again should definitely give this recording a serious listen.

The Nation gives this album a thumbs up and recommends that you contact Hughboy Records to place an order today. Hughboy Records can be contacted at 819-978-0380.

BY **WILL NICHOLLS**

*The Nation welcomes all Native albums for review.*



COMMENTS

## HEAR THE ELDERS

*"My people will sleep for one hundred years and when they awake it will be the artists who give them back their spirit."*

- Louis Riel

**T**oday marks a special time for all aboriginal people. It's a time of recognition of our inherent rights to life and freedom, as well as the special rights that were given to us as aboriginal inhabitants. We have much to share with the world and be grateful for.

The year 1993 has been set aside by the UN as the Year of Indigenous People to pay respect to the aboriginal peoples in all lands the world over. We are witnesses to a time no one could have dreamed possible. We've had 500 years of European contact yet still manage to hold our cultural ways intact. It's the closeness that we've maintained with the Earth that has helped our culture and ways survive. We have been fortunate that way.

Celebrations will happen - plays and theatre, conferences, demonstrations, spiritual gatherings, dancing and

story-telling.

They will

show the world we have faced insurmountable change, yet our people manage to cope. They will tell the story of our lives with the future in mind. At the same time, we are starting to see a re-emergence

BY R. WEISTCHE

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



PHOTO: ANTHONY SOUTHAM

## CARETAKERS OF THIS PLANET

This is the Year of the Indigenous People, for the world to recognize this unique culture that exists today. The question is: What have we done to promote our culture here at home and abroad?

In our own communities I would venture to say, "nothing." But then I might be wrong.

The fact of the matter is are we still Indigenous People. Or have we become affluent? Have we crossed the line to the other side, confused, not understanding ourselves, who we are, or what we should do. Of course we know who we are, but

keeping our identity and culture

is something else.

To preserve our culture we must keep our native tongues alive and most of all our lands. Without land, we will surely lose our indigenous ways.

All indigenous people are caretakers of this planet who have survived for thousands of years from the fruits of what it had to offer.

Others came here 500 years ago to destroy, pollute and rape the land and thrust some form of genocide onto its indigenous inhabitants.

What will the land be like for our children, 500 years from now? Will this planet be the next moon - lifeless?

BY M. CROMARTY



COMMENTS

# HEAR THE ELDERS...

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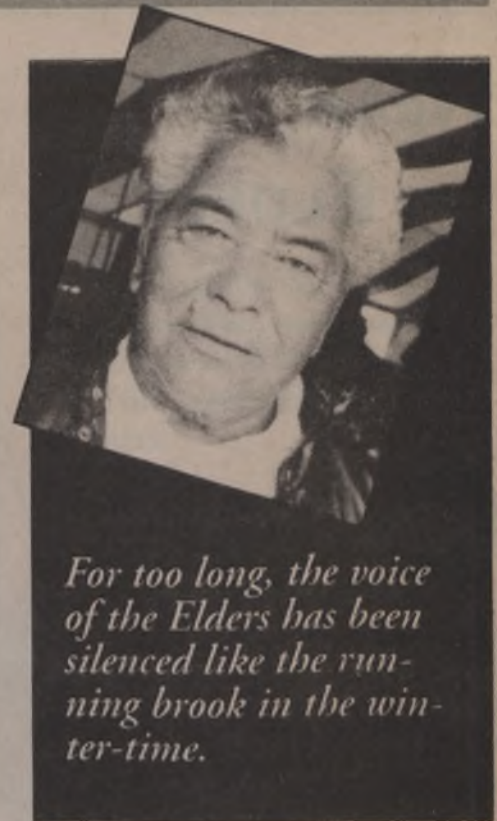
of our people after a long period of being dormant during which everything was asleep. We will hear more about this. We'll hear of things that were not talked about five years ago. Everything will come to take its rightful place.

There are voices in the wind expressing the need for the talk of our Elders to be heard once again - in the meeting rooms, giving counsel, sharing their knowledge, the many different experiences we've had. Quite recently, an Elder from Chisasibi, Robbie Mathew, was named to sit on the World Council of Elders, which is affiliated with the World Council of Indigenous People. Mathews is a man noted for his wisdom. It's a real honour for someone from our area to be given such recognition.

For too long, the voice of the Elders has been silenced like the running brook in the winter-time. Their words have not been listened to with respect. There was a time when they did not speak. There were times I heard them say, "Why isn't anyone writing down my words? They fall on deaf ears." And, often, that has been too much for them.

It is all the Elders who deserve an honourable mention. It will be you who will guide our footsteps to a better and brighter future.

Meeg wetch.



*For too long, the voice of the Elders has been silenced like the running brook in the winter-time.*



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d'heureuses fêtes.





## ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1993

Matthew Coon-Come called it the best general assembly he was ever at. New issues were discussed and emotions ran strong at this year's General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees and the Cree Regional Authority (CRA). The assembly, held in Waskaganish, was organized under the theme "The Children, the Culture, the Land — Our Future."

Much of it was devoted to discussion of social issues like sexual assault, violence against women and incest. Participants felt that open discussion of these issues was a first step toward healing.

Council members also passed several important resolutions, including one calling for a Cree Nation Gathering to determine

the "mission of the Cree Nation and establish the vision of the Cree Nation." The assembly also characterized the poor state of the Chisasibi airstrip as "an emergency" and called on the governments of Quebec and Canada to finally come through with necessary funds. Following is a list of all the resolutions.

### 1. The assembly ratified three items proposed by the Cree Trappers' Association:

#138/93. A decline in the numbers of beaver on Cree traplines prompted the assembly to call for the study and implementation of a beaver relocation program. The decline has especially affected Whapmagoostui, Nemaska, Chisasibi and Mistissini.

#139/93. All levels of government were called on to weigh traditional Cree knowledge in their deliberations, just as they would non-native scientific knowledge. Cree hunters, trappers and fishers were also asked to participate in future reviews of development projects.

#143/93. The CRA and Grand Council were mandated to certify the Cree Trappers' Association Trapper Training Program, following stalling on the part of the Quebec Ministry of Education. A committee will be set up in conjunction with the Cree School Board to establish the certification procedure.



## COMMENTS



**Hélène Fleuriste**

FLEURISTE - FLORIST

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# ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1993

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

**2. Chief Billy Diamond proposed a motion calling for a Cree Nation Gathering.** "The Cree Nation has reached a crucial moment in its history where decisions must be made to ensure the survival of the Cree Nation, its traditions, values and way of life," the resolution says. The Gathering will determine the "mission and vision" of the Cree nation. It will be organized by a Task Force of Cree Leaders and Cree Experts, which will prepare discussion papers and information packages for Crees.

The executive/executive committee of the Grand Council and CRA were mandated to consult every Cree community, Cree entities, the elders and youth to elaborate Cree goals.

**3. The assembly ratified a resolution proposed by Chief Matthew Mukash and seconded by John Petagumskum to reaffirm "united opposition" to the proposed Great Whale project.** The Grand Council was mandated to "do all things necessary to ensure the cancellation" of the project. Waskaganish abstained. The resolution has been passed every year since 1989.

**4. Chief Matthew Mukash proposed another motion calling on the Grand Council and the Cree Regional Authority to extend their "total and complete moral support" to the Special Traditional Gathering to be held at the mouth of the Great Whale River next summer**

and in subsequent years. All Crees and Cree entities were encouraged to participate.

**5. The Grand Council and CRA were mandated to "fully support" the efforts of the Cree nation of Chisasibi to secure funding in order to provide proper facilities for the airstrip in Chisasibi.** Currently, the airstrip has neither shelter, lighting or control tower and progress has been negligible in obtaining government funds to rectify the situation. The assembly characterized the situation as "an emergency" and called on Quebec and Ottawa to act immediately.

**6. The Cree School Board was asked to coordinate the upcoming Conference on Education in conjunction with the director-general of the CRA.**

**7. The assembly voted to hold Special General Assembly on Justice and Public Security in the 1994-95 fiscal year. Financing will be sought from Ottawa and Quebec.**

**8. A resolution called for immediate "emergency measures" to help the Innu of Davis Inlet relocate and "find adequate social, economic and living conditions."**

**9. The Grand Council and CRA were asked to prepare a list of all resolutions passed since the two bodies were formed.**

**10. The assembly called on Pope John Paul II to "walk with the Indigenous Nations and Peoples on the sacred path toward the healing of historical guilt, grief and shame." The Pope was also asked to revoke the 1493 Inter-Cetera Bull and return all artifacts, traditional and sacred objects taken from the Cree Nation and other indigenous nations by the Catholic Church.**

**11. The assembly directed the Board of Compensation, the James Bay Eeyou Compane and Cree entities to review and consider revisions in their allocation policies and cost-of-living indexation in the respective communities.** The Grand Council was also directed to start talks with Ottawa and Quebec to provide adequate subsidies for transportation of goods and construction material to the North. This resolution was passed following concerns that several First Nations, among them Whapmagoostui, experience a higher cost of living due to expensive transportation costs.

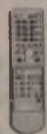
**12. The next general assembly will be held in Eastmain.**



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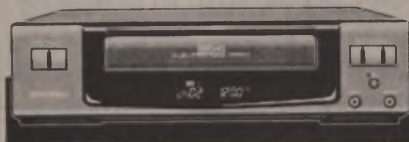
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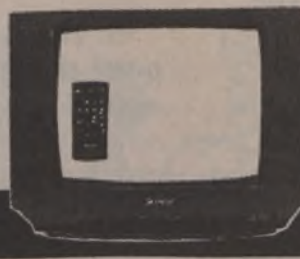
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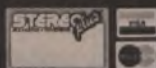
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SPORTS

# LEFT-WINGER FROM WEMINDJI SCORES BIG

**Brant Blackned's face lights up when he remembers playing hockey in the annual Val d'Or tournament.**

**"Those were fun times," he smiles.**

**"There was no pressure." Things have changed. Blackned is still having fun, but six days a week he puts himself through a torturous three-hour workout in the hockey rink and the gym - not to mention sweating through gruelling matches as a player on one of the best major junior leagues in the country.**

Blackned, 19, is a front-bench left-winger for the Laval Titans, the team known in the hockey world as the major junior league's equivalent to the Montreal Canadiens.

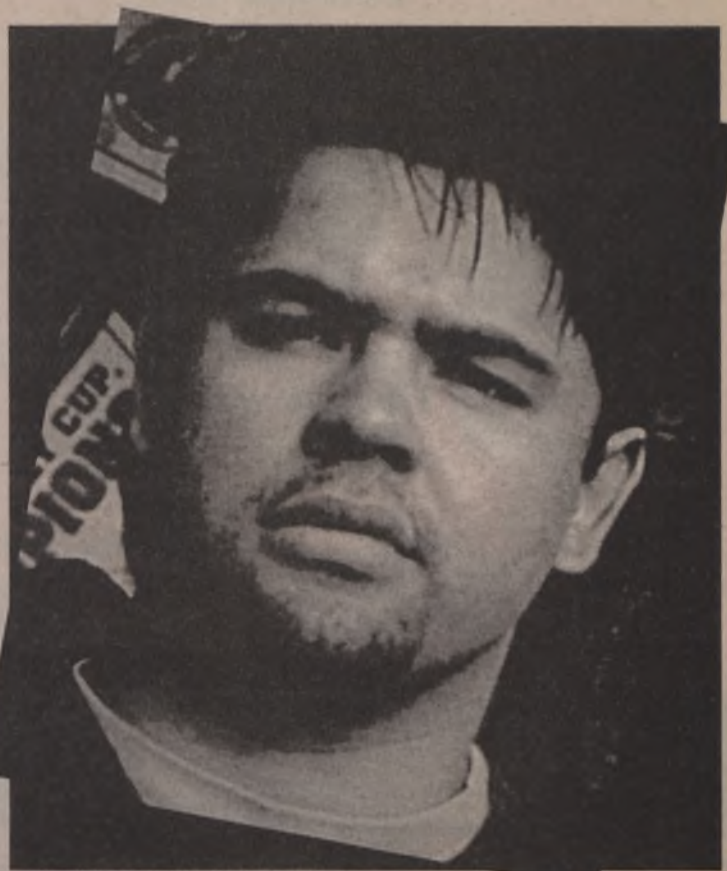
Blackned, who has lived away from his home in Wemindji for four years, has high standards to live up to. Hockey greats like Mario Lemieux, Michael Bossy and Robert Sauve all sharpened their teeth playing for the Titans. Last year, the Titans finished first in Quebec's 13-team major junior league and came in third at the nationally televised Memorial Cup playoffs.

The Titans are all but certain to get another shot at the cup this year. They are six points ahead of second-place Verdun, and it's half-way through the season.

Blackned is up to the challenge. With 29 points (13 goals) so far this season, he's one of the team's scoring leaders. The day of our interview outside the Montreal Forum, a major daily newspaper devoted an entire page to the Titans' spectacular record. The paper noted that Blackned had made a game-tying assist in a close contest against Beauport the previous day, plus a goal against Hull the day before that. It's Blackned's third year with the Titans, and he says he has a good chance of being drafted by a professional hockey club this year. He says he owes a lot to the encouragement from the Titans organization and his family.

"They expect a lot out of you. The owners are self-made men and expect the team to do well because they worked hard for what they got," he says, adding that he also gets a lot of support from his team-mates. "The team is really close. We work together six days a week."

BY ALEX ROSLIN



NATION PHOTO: ERNEST WEBB

That support comes in handy during long seasons away from family and friends back home. "During the first two years away, I was very homesick," he says. "Those were hard times for me. I felt like moving back, but my parents were always pushing me."

Blackned left Wemindji when he was 15 to play hockey and go to school in Hull, after an impressive record playing for Cree local teams. In his last year playing in Wemindji, he racked up 72 points in just 16 games. He spent one season with a Hull Bantam AA team, then another year on a Midget AAA team in Amos. The year after that he moved again - this time to Laval. Blackned said all the moving around was "a good experience," but added, "It helps when you have family here." Blackned is now staying with his aunt in Dorval.

He needs just one more course to get his high school diploma, something that will come in handy if his pro career doesn't pan out. In that case, he already has an alternative plan: he'll become an electrician.

Does Blackned think of himself as a role model? He smiles. "Well, when I went home last time, a lot of kids came over with my brother to see me," he says. "All the games in the Memorial Cup were on TSN."

Although neither of his younger brothers have any NHL ambitions (one is still a toddler), Brant has some advice for other aspiring Gretskies: "If you want it badly enough, you can do it. There are players who aren't very good, but still turn pro just because they're so committed. You can do it if you put your heart into it."



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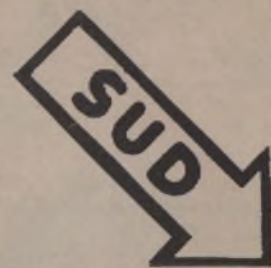
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Hopefully, next time...





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# VIDEOS, POP AND COUNTRY HITS

## TOP VIDEO RENTALS

1. **Point of No Return**, *Bridget Fonda, Gabriel Byrne*, Warner Home Video (R-1993)
2. **Groundhog Day**, *Bill Murray, Andie MacDowell*, Columbia TriStar Home Video (PG-1993)
3. **Falling Down**, *Michael Douglas*, Warner Home Video (R-1993)
4. **Aladdin**, *Animated*, Walt Disney Home Video (G-1992)
5. **Indecent Proposal**, *Robert Redford, Demi Moore*, Paramount Home Video (R-1993)
6. **National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1**, *Emilio Estevez, Samuel L. Jackson*, Columbia TriStar Home Video (PG-13-1993)
7. **Alive**, *Ethan Hawke, Vincent Spano*, Touchstone Home Video (R-1993)
8. **The Sandlot**, *James Earl Jones, Mike Vitar*, FoxVideo (PG-1993)
9. **Fire in the Sky**, *D.B. Sweeney, James Garner*, Paramount Home Video (PG-13-1993)
10. **Scent of a Woman**, *Al Pacino, Chris O'Donnell*, Universal Home Video (R-1992)

## TOP POP ALBUMS

1. **Bat Out of Hell II: Back Into Hell**, *Meatloaf*, MCA
2. **VS.**, *Pearl Jam*, Epic
3. **Common Thread: The Songs of the Eagles**, *Various Artists*, Warner Bros.
4. **Music Box**, *Mariah Carey*, Columbia
5. **River of Dreams**, *Billy Joel*, Columbia
6. **It's On (Dr. Dre 187UM)** *Killa, Eazy-E*, Ruthless
7. **Blind Melon**, *Blind Melon*, Capitol
8. **Janet.**, *Janet Jackson*, Virgin
9. **MTV Unplugged**, *10,000 Maniacs*, Elektra
10. **In Utero**, *Nirvana*, Geffen

## TOP POP SINGLES

1. **All That She Wants**, *Ace of Base*, Arista
2. **I'd Do Anything for Love**, *Meatloaf*, MCA
3. **Again**, *Janet Jackson*, Virgin
4. **Just Kickin' It**, *Xscape*, Columbia
5. **Dreamlover**, *Mariah Carey*, Columbia

6. **Gangsta Lean**, *DRS*, Capitol
7. **Hey Mr. D.J.**, *Zhane*, Epic
8. **Shoop**, *Salt-N-Pepa*, Next Plateau
9. **Right Here (Human Nature)**, *Downtown*, SWV, RCA
10. **Whoomp!**, *Tag Team*, Life

## TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

1. **Common Thread: The Songs of the Eagles**, *Various Artists*, Warner Bros.
2. **Greatest Hits Volume Two**, *Reba McEntire*, MCA
3. **Easy Come, Easy Go**, *George Strait*, MCA
4. **In Pieces**, *Garth Brooks*, Liberty
5. **I Still Believe in You**, *Vince Gill*, MCA
6. **A Lot About Livin'**, *Alan Jackson*, Arista
7. **The Song Remembers When**, *Trisha Yearwood*, MCA
8. **Almost Goodbye**, *Mark Chestnut*, MCA
9. **Confederate Railroad**, *Confederate Railroad*, Atlantic
10. **Hard Workin' Man**, *Brooks & Dunn*, Arista

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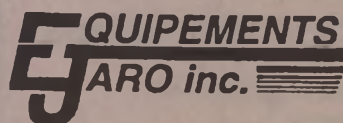
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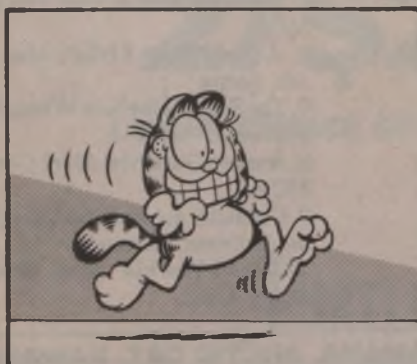
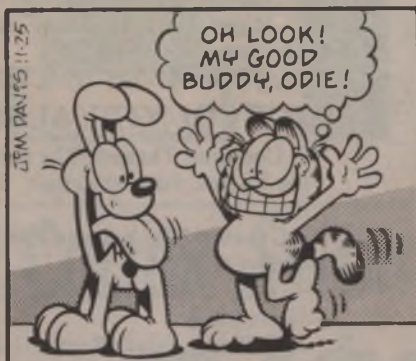
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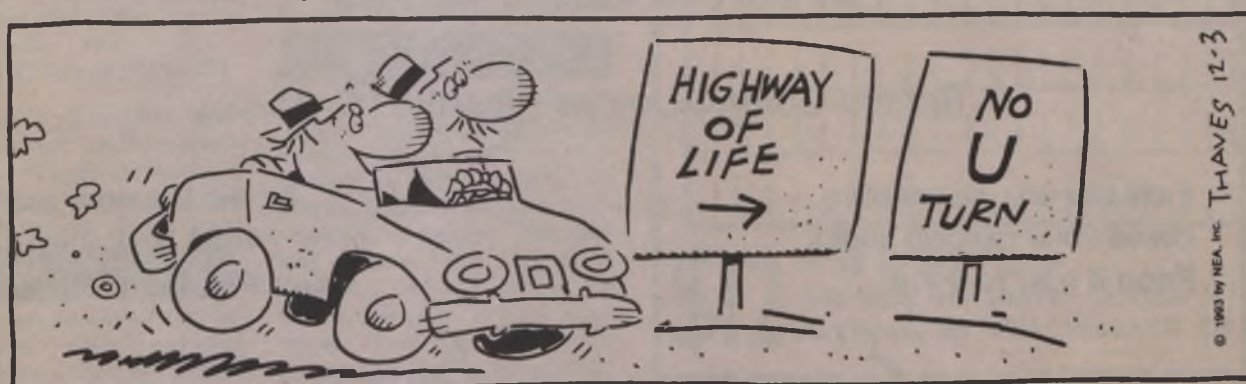
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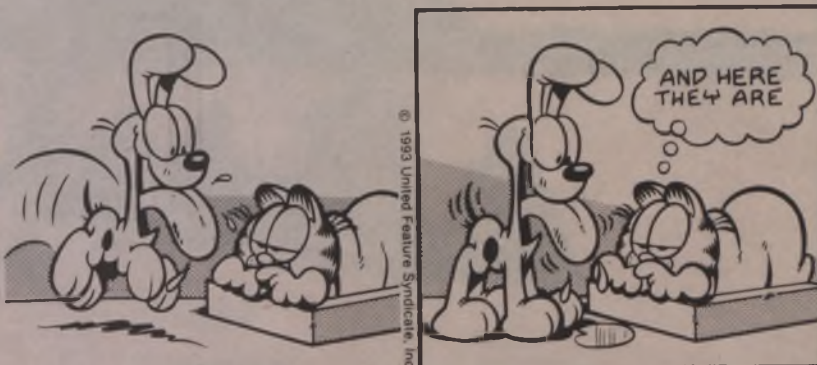
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# MATTHEW COON-COME...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

As far as I know, the Cree nation is the only one that elects its leaders. So that gives us more strength, more power for the Grand Chief. In other communities, he's elected by the chiefs themselves. So he doesn't have a base or stronghold. People feel like he is really a bureaucrat. There is a need to address the ways we do things to make native leaders more accountable. Like what is the relationship between the Assembly of First Nations and the Crees? The Crees and the First Nations of Quebec? What is the common ground?

## **The Crees have been active in helping natives across Canada, haven't they?**

We helped the Lubicon nation, Bear Island, the Innu with the low-level flights, the Davis Inlet people, the people in B.C. We mention them in our presentations. When we meet with officials. When they ask us to speak at their general assemblies and share those experiences, there are lessons we've learned and I think we should pass them on.

## **There has been some criticism of one of our Cree companies in the media—Cree Construction and its ties to Beaver Asphalte, a company with close Liberal ties. What do you think about this situation?**

If you want to get into economic ventures, you have to look at the present status of the Cree nation. You don't have the technical and resource people to do it, and you can't benefit from certain contracts.

Cree Construction had made a \$5-million profit over the years and they're the ones who have been carrying the other companies of CreeCo. They've done really well and have created over 300 jobs. We can't go ask those guys, hey, what the hell are you doing? They'll tell you, go jump in a lake. Hopefully, joint ventures are a stepping stone to having your own people being able to run this kind of a job.

## **You don't see it as any type of a scandal?**

No, because when you get a contract, you can subcontract to whomever you want. If those people get themselves into trouble, that's their problem. We have a contract for them to do something, and we expect those people to carry out their obligations. Crees haven't fully understood how it works. These are new things for us. When they look at it from their perspective, they say, well, there are more white people working out there. Why is that? I think the weakness of Cree Construction, and the Cree nation as a whole, is that we haven't educated our people. All they know is, hey, I didn't get the job.

## **Where do you see us, the Cree nation, 100 years from now, and what's being done today to make sure we achieve that?**

We have to give hope and some form of peace to that generation. We've got to solve the problems now. The young people will not want to deal with issues of self-determination. They want to deal with the problems of today, the problems of what they see, social problems, policing, health, education.

We've got to address those today. If you don't address them today, those people will never be interested in talking about the right to self-determination because they're more concerned about their day-to-day lives. That's the first thing. Leaders are elected to think of the future. If anything, that's your most important responsibility. There's no one else who's in a position to do it.

And that entails what? When you look at what is happening on the Cree lands, you see the natural resources being extracted and you see the policies of the government. You've got to change these policies. We can be self-sufficient. But how? You can do it by having a say in the development of the territory. If we have a say, we will no longer have to depend on the government for handouts. We will be beneficiaries

of the natural resources and can spend them the way we think they should be spent.

That's the ultimate objective. So the people who live off the land will be able to become the decision-makers. Then we'll be the true masters of our own society. We need to start a belated nation-building.

We're at the crossroads. That means we have to assess where we came from. The structures we have created are overwhelming right now. We can't have 20 entities for 12,000 Crees. That's ridiculous. We have so many people who are appointed and elected by the Cree nation to represent the Board of Compensation, School Board, Health Board. Meanwhile, the chief is wondering what is going on. We've got to reassess all these entities.

I would like to see pooling all our funds together. Can you imagine the economic clout we'd have if we did that? If we did that, we'd be able to promote our own economic development. We would decide on the loans, on the grants, you name it.

## **One last question. If you had a magic wand, and you could wave it once and anything that you wanted could happen, what would you do with it?**

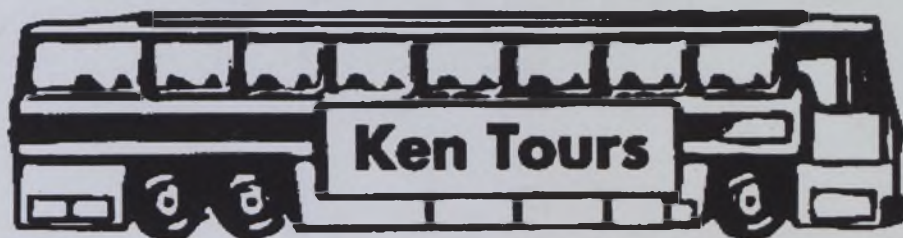
[laughter] What kind of a question is that? We live in the real world. [more laughter] That's not worth answering.

## **Is there anything you wanted to add?**

The greatest challenge of the Cree Nation is, will we be able to work together? You hear a lot of political rhetoric about it. But, in reality, I see we're slowly pulling apart, trying to do our own thing. Bands doing their own thing, band corporations doing their own thing. I think we have to decide if we will be able to work together. If we can't, it will be detrimental to ourselves. I think that will be the challenge.



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